

DRAFT

“The Arizona Commission on Access to Justice continued its commitment of studying and making recommendations on innovative ways of promoting access to justice for individuals who cannot afford legal counsel or who choose to represent themselves in civil cases. The Commission evaluates best practices within Arizona and other states, identifying possible changes in court rules or practices to reduce barriers to access, identify and encourage the adoption of best practices among legal service providers, and consider potential long-term funding options.”

What's Inside

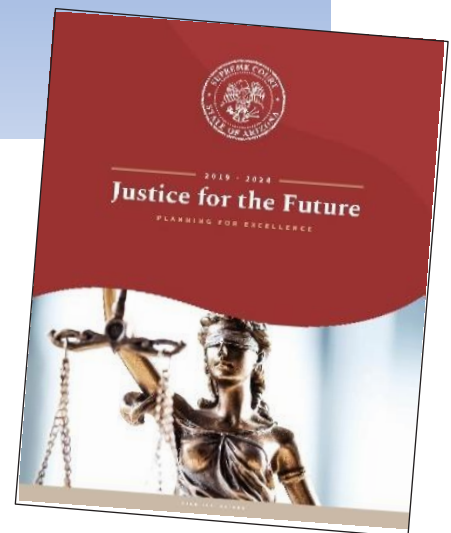
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Message from the Chief Justice



The judicial branch's five-year strategic agenda, *Justice for the Future: Planning for Excellence*, has proven to be a valuable guide through an unexpected public health crisis. The Commission on Access to Justice has leveraged technology, community partnerships, and stakeholder networks to improve access to justice while limiting access to courthouses for the safety of all. Remote appearances, online materials and training, and increased legal help options have made the best of a bad situation and allowed Arizona's courts to serve the public in ways that also protect their health. See inside this year's report for the Commission's innovative responses.

Chief Justice Robert Brutinel
Arizona Supreme Court



From the Commission Chairs



Judge Lawrence F. Winthrop, Chair

Judge Samuel A. Thumma, Vice Chair

The coronavirus pandemic dominated our lives in most of 2020, including access to justice issues. The pandemic demonstrated, again, the fragility of seemingly secure economic status, has increased public awareness of the ripple effect of evictions on families and the community and the need to address the affordable housing crisis that exists in most cities.

Without question, slowed economic recovery from the pandemic with means an increase in Arizona's poverty population and continued increased demand for civil legal assistance in housing, employment, debt, and benefit denial issues.

Legal aid agencies remain overwhelmed with demand for civil legal assistance. These agencies face actual or anticipated loss of funding, threatening not only the timely delivery of legal services but the administrative capacity to administer an effective volunteer lawyer program. The need for useful legal information that can be understood and used by self-represented litigants ("SRLs") remains high.

Although phone and virtual court appearances are certainly more convenient – particularly for those in rural settings – it may not be as helpful an experience as one where the SRL can actually appear before a judge and feel like they had their "day in court." Additionally, problems with the extent and reliability of broadband services in rural areas have been exposed. But, surprisingly, there were positive developments as a result of the pandemic:

First, there was increased community scrutiny of the civil justice system and encouragement for stakeholders to collaborate and create a more efficient and equitable system. And the pandemic promoted meaningful collaboration between branches of government. Discussions with the Governor's Office, the Arizona Department of Housing, local government leaders, non-profit community organizations and other stakeholders throughout 2020 led to a more collaborative effort to create eviction diversion programs and to provide civil legal assistance for constituents with housing issues.

Second, by allowing remote appearances, the courts discovered flexibility in providing an efficient and effective option to in-person hearings. The option to appear remotely greatly increased the percentage of SRLs participating in court hearings. A commitment is in place to extend reliable broadband coverage throughout the state, including rural areas. And the success of remote appearances has reinforced the value in implementing enhanced online dispute resolution options.

Third, the pandemic encouraged courts to emphasize targeted judicial education and training and a heightened focus on due process and other procedural safeguards for dealing with SRLs, particularly in eviction and debt collection/foreclosure actions.

Entering 2021, the Arizona Commission on Access to Justice will continue improving the opportunity for all to meaningfully participate in the civil justice system. We will continue monitoring the evolving challenges involving financial, employment and housing issues, and will work with our partners – including the State Bar of Arizona, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Arizona Bar Foundation and Arizona's legal aid agencies – to ensure the public has readily accessible and useful legal information.

Additionally, we will continue to encourage financial support for the legal aid agencies and other entities who assist Arizona's poverty population and those of modest means with their civil legal challenges.

Executive Summary

Like most of the world, the Arizona Commission on Access to Justice and its community partners focused much of its attention in 2020 on the COVID-19 pandemic, while also pursuing existing goals. Highlights from 2020 include:

- Reviewing state and federal changes in the law affecting evictions in Arizona and continuing to provide updated information, forms, and guidance to landlords and tenants. The Commission worked with justice court administrators to design and implement training for court staff and judges on due process and other safeguards concerning the eviction process, and a workgroup was formed to review compliance with the federal CARES Act.
- Collaborating with the state and local bar associations, the Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, law librarians and with legal aid agencies to provide state-wide educational outreach and create a legal information hotline to assist Arizonans with legal questions arising out of the pandemic, including those relating to housing, debt and availability of state and federal benefits.
- Collaborating with the Arizona Secretary of State and the Arizona State Librarian to enhance broadband Internet access across rural Arizona to improve virtual access to volunteer legal services and meaningful participation in remote court appearances.
- Continuing availability of Maricopa County Superior Court's Family Court Navigator program, once again helping more than 100,000 self-represented litigants understand and navigate the court system.
- Expanding and enhancing the content available from [AzCourtHelp.org](https://www.azcourthelp.org), the online virtual legal information resource center that connected hundreds of thousands of individuals with useful legal information and live chat services at a time when they had limited or no access to court buildings or personnel throughout the pandemic.
- Collaborating with the development and launch of [AZCourtCare.org](https://www.azcourtcare.org), an online legal resource to help users understand and navigate Arizona's mental health system and resources.
- Launching [AZPOINT.azcourts.gov](https://www.azcourts.gov) – the online resource for victims of domestic violence to start the process for obtaining a protective order.
- Monitoring the design and approval of newly created legal services options: Legal Paraprofessionals and Alternative Business Structures; both options are designed to improve access to affordable legal help.
- Participating in racial justice efforts, including improving access to civil justice through adequate funding, volunteer lawyer programs, and pro bono efforts. Arizona's courts are also reviewing ways to improve recruiting minorities and expanding diversity in judicial branch employment, management, and judicial officer roles.

What follows is the 2020 Annual Report, summarizing the Commission's work to help serve the important Arizona Supreme Court Strategic Agenda goal of promoting access to justice.

Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Both federal and state governments approved stimulus legislation in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Arizona was declared eligible for federal disaster relief funds with a portion of these funds dedicated to assist those unemployed and/or homeless as a result of the pandemic. In Arizona, funds for civil legal assistance were included as part of the \$50 million earmarked for the poverty population. A request for additional funding of \$150 million remains pending...

The Pew Charitable Trust issued a detailed report and recommendations on potential reform measures in debt collection disputes. Recommendations include tracking data on debt claims, educating legislators on the current disadvantages that debtors face, reviewing and redesigning court rules and procedures to ensure all parties understand their options and can effectively participate in resolution of these claims.



Additionally, the developing COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 prompted extensive expansion of bi-lingual, web-related information and resources available at: <https://www.azcourts.gov/legalinfohub>, including an extensive FAQ section, podcasts, legal information videos, legal information sheets and a self-service center.

Commission efforts in response to the unprecedented changes as a result of COVID include:

The Arizona Disaster Legal Information Hotline was created in collaboration with the State Bar of Arizona, the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education (“Bar Foundation”), the ASU law school, and legal aid entities, with input and encouragement from the Governor’s Office. The Bar Foundation also supplemented the existing AZLawHelp.org and AZCourtHelp.org websites to provide additional updated information for those seeking legal assistance.

CISCO Systems, Inc., will partner with the Arizona State Library to install new external wireless access points to provide broadband internet capability to underserved rural areas, which in turn will help facilitate the delivery of useful information and legal assistance to those communities.

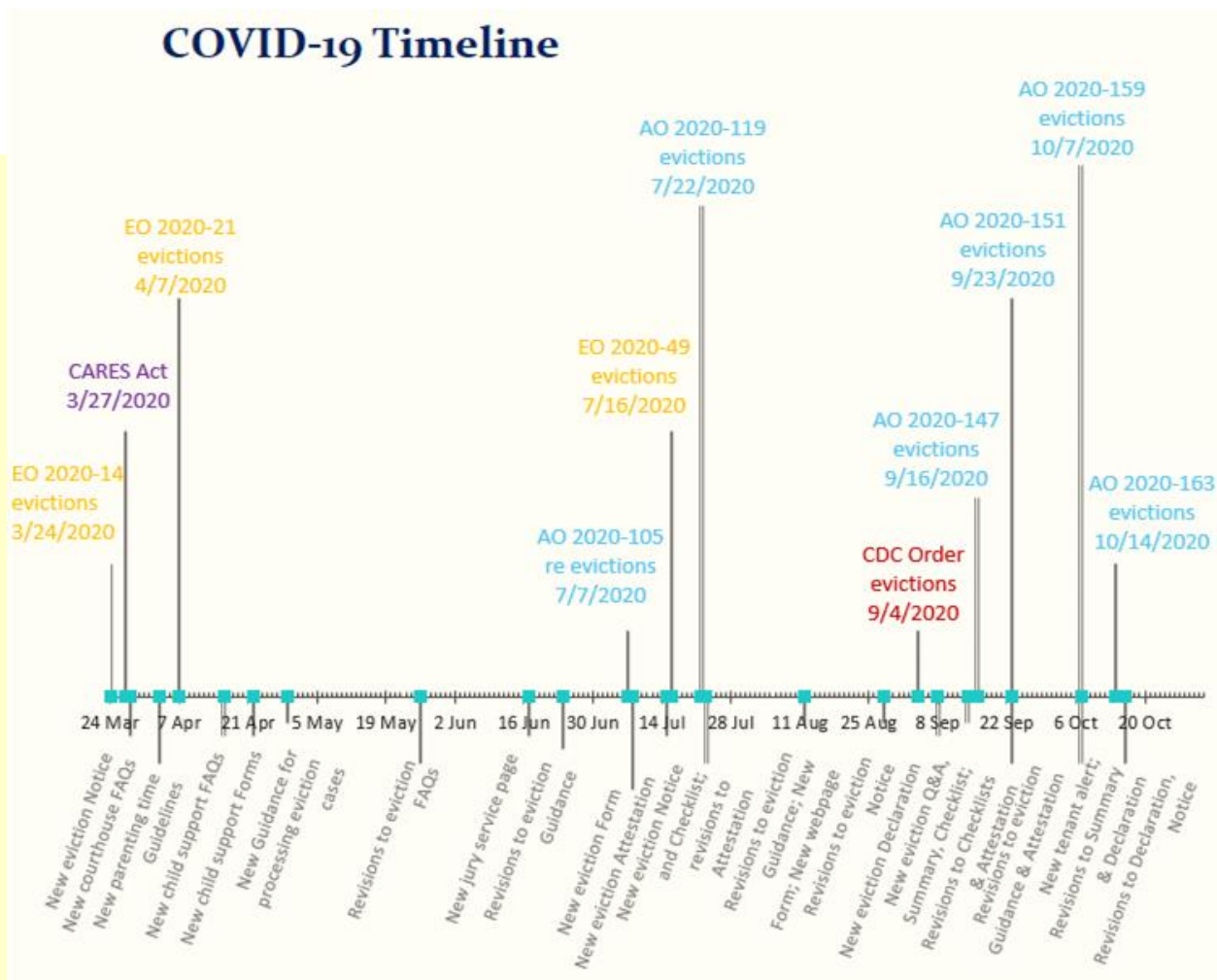
The Commission’s Law4AZ collaborative library program was awarded a \$7,500 federal grant to update its statewide training program through August 2021. The first phase focuses on information gathering on underserved areas. The second phase focuses on training public librarians in the underserved areas how to assist their patrons in accessing useful legal information and resources, all with the goal of increasing access to civil justice for the affected communities.

The Commission’s limited jurisdiction and self-represented litigant work group has expanded its continuing work in creating public information resources, including court forms, YouTube videos and providing links to civil legal services.

Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Arizona COVID-19 timeline below begins on March 24, 2020, when Governor Doug Ducey issued Executive Order 2020-14, which postponed the enforcement of eviction actions. Subsequent state and federal agency orders are identified in the upper section of the timeline. Multiple statewide memoranda (not represented in the timeline) were issued by the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts to update and assist court clerks, administrators, and judges in the state with implementation efforts regarding eviction-related actions and orders.

It is clear from the timeline that eviction actions have been a focus area during the pandemic. This topic was clearly important to the public as reflected in overall web traffic increases compared to last year. In a month-to-month comparison, the timing of traffic increases is revealing. Sharp increases can be seen after Governor Ducey, President Trump, and the CDC issued their respective orders regulating and/or postponing the enforcement of eviction actions.



Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic

In partnership with the State Bar of Arizona, and with support from the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Arizona Bar Foundation launched the Legal Information Hotline. In late March 2020, the Foundation launched a COVID-19 Legal Information site via AZLawHelp. The site provides important legal information and resources related to the pandemic's impact on the law.

The Hotline is staffed by legal aid attorneys, volunteer lawyers, law school students, and legal professionals. Through the Legal Information Hotline, more than 760 callers received referral to a free ½ hour consultation provided by volunteer attorneys recruited by the State Bar of Arizona.

Partners include Maricopa, Pima, and Yavapai County Bar Associations and Arizona Legal Center. Since May 2020, operators have provided more than 3,700 hours answering calls on the Hotline.

ARIZONA ATTORNEYS
RESPOND
LEGAL HOTLINE
866.611.6022

FREE LEGAL HELP
FOR COVID-19 RELATED ISSUES

COVID-19
INFORMATION
& UPDATES

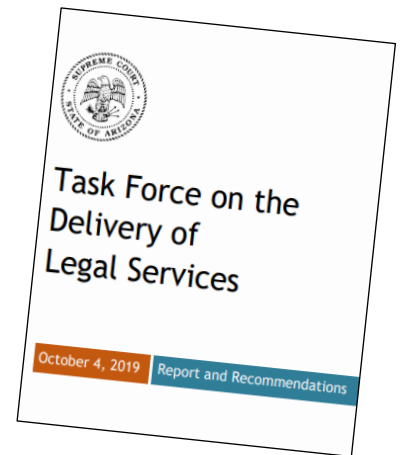


Delivery of Legal Services Reforms

In 2020, the Arizona Supreme Court unanimously approved a series of legal reforms designed to improve access to justice in Arizona, as recommended by the Arizona Delivery of Legal Services Task Force (“Task Force”).

See [Task Force on Delivery of Legal Services Report and Recommendations](#).

Among other reforms, the Task Force recommendations will result in affordable legal services being available through a new tier of legal service provider, “Legal Paraprofessionals,” and through approved “Alternative Business Structures,” which are joint ownership ventures between lawyers and nonlawyers. These new legal services options require completion of designated educational requirements, an application, certification by the Arizona Supreme Court, and these new providers will be subject to regulatory oversight by the State Bar of Arizona and the Supreme Court to ensure client and public protection.



What's this about? Access to Legal Services

<https://www.azcourts.gov/accesstolegalservices/Whats-This-All-About>

Arizona Legal Problems and Solutions

<https://youtu.be/EvBZ1D73uQ>

Introducing Arizona's Legal Paraprofessionals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmPix6VBstU>

Who can Own an Arizona Law Firm?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yObAJHMbo3g&feature=emb_title

Arizona Supreme Court Vice Chief Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer, Chair of the Delivery of Legal Services Task Force, publicly outlined the need for and anticipated operation of these legal services reforms on television, through educational panels, articles, and podcasts. The Task Force's innovative recommendations were nationally recognized by business and law media outlets and by other states' bar associations and other professional legal associations.



How Arizona is Pioneering a Path for Access to Justice Podcast with

Vice Chief Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer

<https://legalkarma.org/how-arizona-is-pioneering-a-path-for-access-to-justice/>

Law Libraries and Virtual Resource Centers

Arizona law libraries have provided uninterrupted service to court customers during the COVID-19 crisis in many ways: on-site, curbside pickup, phone help, AZCourtHelp.org Live Chat, local chat lines, and email. In this fashion, the law library serves as a clearinghouse for information about legal and social services related to COVID-19.

County Law Libraries with Self-Service Centers

Cochise County
Coconino County
Maricopa County
Mohave County
Pima County
Pinal County
Yavapai County
Yuma County



To find information about chatting online with a State Law Librarian check out: <https://azcourthelp.org/live-chat>

Maricopa County Law Library Resource Center Court Navigators

In partnership with AmeriCorps, the Maricopa County Law Library Resource Center continues to operate and manages a family court navigator program, formally known as “PACS” (Providing Access to Court Services).

The court trains and supervises qualified undergraduate students who serve court customers in the Customer Service and Protective Order areas and at the Information Desks. They help identify appropriate court forms, serve as scribes for court customers when needed and provide navigational and court escort assistance. Many of the navigators speak languages other than English, which extends the court’s efforts to provide meaningful access to justice.

The students who serve as Court Navigators can earn college credit and a monetary stipend for their service. To date, a significant percentage of Court Navigators go on to attend law school or to work in the court system in Arizona and elsewhere.

Virtual Resource Centers

Free Legal Talks

Free Legal Talks are held at the Coconino County Law Library in the Legal Talks classroom as well as at the Yuma County Courthouse. The talks are broadcast live, allowing anyone to attend from a computer or mobile device. In addition, access to Legal Talks videos is available at AZCourtHelp.org.



The Coconino County Law Library created five videos on COVID-19 legal issues:

Changing Child Support During COVID-19
COVID-19: Changes to the Landlord/Tenant Law
Getting a Protective Order During COVID-19
Getting Married at a Courthouse During COVID-19
COVID-19 Parenting Time

Preparing for Court



Cans and Canno... of Court Help



Parent Education Program



Eviction



2019

Live Chat Operators – 9
of Chat Sessions – 923
Chat Hours – 149
Average Length of Chat Sessions – 9 mins

2020

Live Chat Operators – 12
of Chat Sessions – 3,938
Chat Hours – 632.5
Average Length of Chat Sessions – 10 mins



Free Legal Talk Series

February 3-5, 2021

Wednesday, 2/3
11-11:45 a.m.

**Probate &
Estate
Planning**

Angela Moore
Moore, Masunas & Moore, PLLC

Thursday, 2/4
12-12:45 p.m.

**Neighbor
Law**

Christopher Combs
Combs Law Group, PC

Friday, 2/5
11-11:45 a.m.

**Student Loan
Debt Options**

Lisa Thompson
Thompson Law Group, PC

Online at:

<https://azcourthelp.org/public-events>

Virtual Resource Centers

The AZCourtHelp.org website, administered by the Arizona Bar Foundation through the support of the Arizona Supreme Court, works in partnership with the courts across Arizona and their law libraries. The website's Legal Talks series is a collaboration between the Superior Court in Coconino County and its Virtual Resource Center, the Arizona Attorney General's Office, the State Library of Arizona, the Department of Economic Security and experts who present on their topics of expertise.

Information on AZCourtHelp.org includes:

- Assisting people who need to use court services with finding the practical information they need about their court: location, hours, terms of payment, parking, accessibility, etc.
- Arizona law librarian-provided live chat forums to answer legal information questions, details on upcoming Legal Talk clinics, and other information needed by self-represented litigants.
- Links and resources to other specialized legal information websites that provide broader legal information and access, and when possible, to free and reduced legal assistance, including:



AZCourtHelp.org

2020 Usage Highlights for AZCourtHelp.org:

*Court Location and Contact Information –
149,951 pageviews*

*Family Law Information and Forms –
126,639 pageviews*

*Eviction Information and Forms –
83,149 pageviews*

*Marriage and Wedding Information –
80,427 pageviews*

*Traffic Information –
42,149 pageviews*

*Protective Order Information and Forms –
32,533 pageviews*

*Legal Aid Resources and Legal Representation –
17,379 pageviews*



Virtual Resource Centers



Law4AZ is a collaboration between the Access to Justice Commission, the Arizona Secretary of State and the Arizona State Librarian. Law4AZ is working to strategically build Arizona public libraries' capacity to connect their patrons with useful legal information and access to resources.

Law4AZ trains and sends volunteer law librarians around the state to help educate public librarians on how to help patrons find useful law-related information. At the same time, these volunteers assess each public library's tech-readiness and ability to access AZCourtHelp Legal Talks broadcasts.

In partnership with Coconino Geographic Information Systems, in 2020 and continuing in 2021, Law4AZ is gathering demographic information and surveying 206 public libraries, 187 court buildings, and 15 law libraries/self-help centers about resources available to self-represented litigants. This work will result in a map that will further demonstrate the justice gap across Arizona, allowing public libraries to target services toward communities with the greatest need.

In 2021 and 2022, Law4AZ will launch training and technology-building services for public libraries in the most-underserved communities and partner with the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education to create online videos of those trainings. Follow this project's status at: <https://statelibraryofarizona.wordpress.com/law4az/>



AZCOURTCARE

In 2020, AZCourtHelp.org worked with the Arizona Supreme Court Committee on Mental Health and the Justice System to develop an online resource for those seeking information about mental treatment resources and options in Arizona. This site includes basic information about the legal process, practical advice on what to do and who to call in a crisis, access to forms and other resources applicable for use in any Arizona county, a glossary of terms, and a collection of acronyms to assist individuals understand and navigate through the process.

See <https://azcourtcare.org/>.

Virtual Resource Centers

The Arizona Supreme Court continues to enhance and expand the content of its online Self-Service Center and Legal Info Hub at <https://www.azcourts.gov/selfservicecenter>, making it easier for self-represented litigants to navigate and find information.

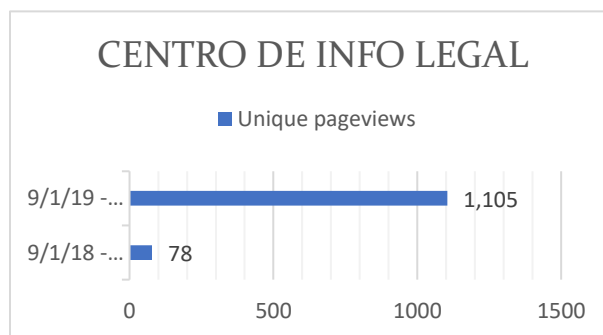
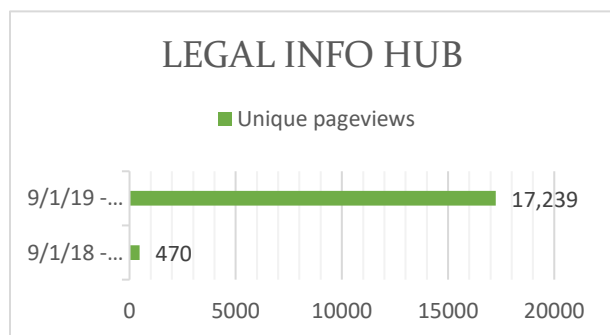
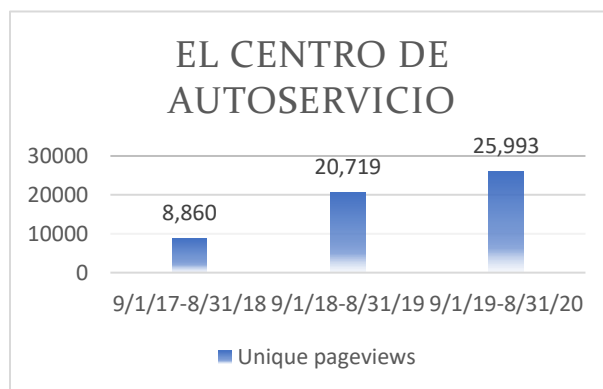
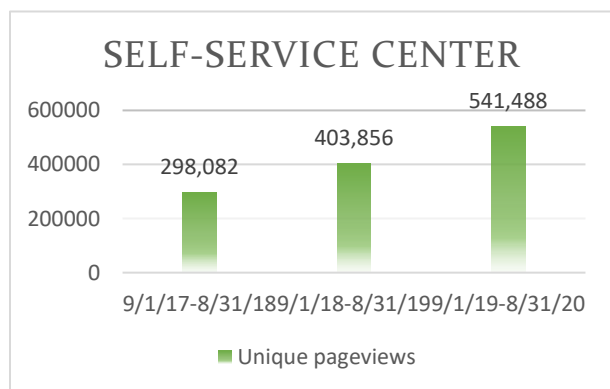
Web enhancements are being incorporated to highlight notes and disclaimers to users; improve navigation with web pages, user-friendly buttons, cross-references to other resources; and directing users to fee waiver and deferral information and forms and corresponding Spanish-language content.

In 2020, new content was developed for small claims, domestic violence, eviction, life care planning, language assistance, making

payments, lottery winnings and tax intercepts, traffic ticket enforcement assistance program, and mental health and the justice system. The content includes new and revised webpages, forms, flowcharts, and Legal Info Sheets, FAQs, and informational videos.

New content is available in English and Spanish. Work is underway to develop new or updated content and resources for housing/eviction, consumer debt, warrants, treatment courts, guardianship and conservatorship of an adult, and other probate-related areas. Internet traffic to the Self-Service Center continues to increase compared to previous years for both English and Spanish sites.

Internet traffic to the Legal Info Hub at <https://www.azcourts.gov/legalinfohub> is growing as new Legal Info Sheets, FAQs, and videos become available to the public.



Workgroup Reports

CARES Act Compliance Workgroup

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided for a moratorium of eviction filings on properties financed by certain federal loan programs and properties participating in specific federal subsidy or voucher programs. The CARES Act moratorium prohibited eviction actions involving these defined properties from March 27, 2020 until late August 2020, given a 30-day notice requirement.

Unfortunately, reports and investigation indicate that hundreds of Arizona evictions for these defined properties proceeded in violation of the CARES Act. As a result, this ad hoc, limited-duration workgroup was formed to provide public awareness and education and promote access to court forms and other resources concerning eviction proceedings that did not comply with the CARES Act.

The workgroup met in late 2020 and continues in 2021. It is anticipated that the workgroup will complete its work in 2021.

The workgroup has four subgroups addressing:

- 1) Public Education and Resources;
- 2) Court-based Solutions;
- 3) Litigation-based Solutions and
- 4) Quick Analysis and Education in Response to Future Federal Pandemic Relief.

Workgroup Reports

Self-Represented Litigants in Limited Jurisdiction Courts

In 2020 the Self-Represented Litigants in Limited Jurisdiction Courts workgroup (“SRL-LJC”) completed the work on video and legal information sheets on evictions and air conditioning repair disputes it had started in 2019. Additionally, the workgroup worked closely with the Bar Foundation, Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Community Legal Services and Step Up to Justice representatives regarding updated eviction-related data during the pandemic.

Other work completed in 2020 included informational videos on subsidized housing and military services and updates to the Residential Eviction Procedures Information Sheet referenced in the Rules of Procedure for Eviction Actions.

The SRL-LJC workgroup anticipated that even with an eviction moratorium in place, other pandemic-related economic hardships would continue to grow. As such, it recognized the need for expanded information and resources related to consumer debt issues and is continuing its work on consumer debt-related legal information, including YouTube videos and legal information sheets.

The group membership now includes attorneys from the debt collection and defense bars.

Workgroup Membership

Hon. Anna Huberman, Chair
Maricopa County Justice Courts

Charles Adornetto
Maricopa County Justice Courts

Shelly Bacon
Superior Court in Coconino County

Mike Baumstark
Administrative Office of the Courts

Scott Davis
Maricopa County Justice Courts

Veronika Fabian
Choi & Fabian, PLC

Stanley Hammerman
Hammerman & Hultgren

Denise Holliday
Holliday & Holliday, P.C.

Eric Logvin
Law Office of James R. Vaughan, P.C.

John Skiba
Arizona Consumer Law Group

Workgroup Reports

Inter-Governmental Collaboration

Throughout 2020, the Intergovernmental Collaboration Workgroup's efforts have focused on partnerships with state and local governments to increase access to legal information and services during the pandemic.

Specifically, the Intergovernmental Collaboration Workgroup assisted with efforts to:

- Request that, in light of the federal pandemic relief funding being distributed to local governments, city and county elected leaders throughout Arizona recognize and prioritize legal assistance as an "essential service" for constituents. This request led the City of Phoenix to partner with Community Legal Services and direct of some CARES Act funding to support eviction prevention legal services for those in need.
- Encourage the creation of a COVID-19 statewide legal information Hotline and free volunteer lawyer consultation. The Hotline is a collaboration between the Governor's Office, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the State Bar of Arizona, the ASU law school, the Arizona's legal aid programs, multiple county bar associations and the Arizona Bar Foundation. Launched May 20th, the Hotline has received more than 2,500 calls from Arizonans needing legal information related to the pandemic and referred more than 730 callers for free half-hour consultations provided by volunteer attorneys.
- Increase access to legal information for the public related to changes in Arizona law and provide enhanced technology to access Arizona courts. Special COVID-19 pages were created online in the existing AZLawHelp and AZCourtHelp platforms, providing updated information about Housing/Eviction, Family Law, Consumer Law/Debt, Protective Orders, Unemployment and Employment matters, and identifying additional resources for legal help. AZCourtHelp added licenses for its online chat feature, staffed by volunteer law librarians.

Legal information provided via chat more than doubled since April over the same time a year ago.

Workgroup Membership

Hon. Lawrence F. Winthrop. Chair

Pamela Bridge
Community Legal Services, Inc.

Beth Ann Broeker
Arizona Department of Juvenile
Corrections

Christina Corieri
Arizona Governor's Office

Anni L. Foster
Office of the Governor

Kevin Groman
Association of Corporate Counsel -
Pro Bono Committee

Maria Morlacci
Arizona Attorney General

Janet K. Regner
AOC - Court Services Division

Ms. Kevin Ruegg Ph.D.
Arizona Foundation for Legal
Services & Education

Hon. Joseph Welty
Superior Court in Maricopa County

Anthony Young, Esq.
Southern Arizona Legal Aid

The Intergovernmental Collaboration Workgroup reported progress on other fronts during 2020:

- ▶ *Guardianship* – efforts related to reentry and kinship care have continued on a regional or service area basis in collaboration with community-based partners, and assistance was provided to legal aid representatives within coordinating applications for legal services funding in this critical area.
- ▶ *Eviction Efforts* – The Bar Foundation has continued to work with the Arizona Department of Housing in furtherance of its eviction prevention pilot project, providing targeted information and resources for eviction prevention in Pima and Maricopa County. We anticipate those efforts will in 2021 include allocation of supplemental federal funding to eviction-related legal services. In the interim, workgroup members:
 - Are active participants in various regional and statewide stakeholder group meetings addressing the eviction crisis.
 - Have regularly met with local and state elected officials to discuss solutions to the current eviction crisis and steps to contain future eviction related issues.
 - Are communicating with national housing advocacy groups and evaluating efforts in other states and jurisdictions related to eviction prevention.
- ▶ *AZ Crime Victim Technology* – A collaborative technology project grant was awarded by the Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime to develop an online resource for AZ crime victims needing civil legal information and services. This project has brought together legal service providers, crime victim advocates and various government, law enforcement, social service, and prosecutorial agencies across the state. The launch date for distribution of funding for these services is anticipated in the Spring of 2021.
- ▶ *Domestic Violence Legal Document Preparer Pilot Project* – Domestic Violence Legal Document Preparer Pilot Project – Administrative Order 2020-25 authorized a new pilot project to increase access to free civil legal help for victims of domestic violence. The goal of the pilot project is to train and license lay legal advocates based in domestic violence shelter programs across the state to prepare legal documents related to family law, housing, consumer, and protective order matters, all under the supervision of legal aid lawyers. If successful, this project may be replicated with other non-profit entities and social work professionals to increase access to critically needed civil legal assistance. Currently, court administrators and legal aid representatives continue to develop project guidelines and the project has received 11 applications from lay legal advocates across the state to participate.
- ▶ *VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) Funds* – Earlier in the year, workgroup representatives met with Arizona’s VOCA administrator to discuss a statewide project to expand civil legal assistance to all victims of crime. After VOCA released the application for the next round of funding, members assisted legal aid programs in preparing and coordinating their proposals for funding in this area. As a result, each program received an increase to their VOCA awards for the coming year.

Workgroup Reports

Public Information and Messaging

The Public Information and Messaging workgroup worked throughout the year to assess the impact of the pandemic on maintaining meaningful access to all of Arizona's courts. Members worked with court leadership and administrators, bar associations, and law libraries to share timely bi-lingual information and guidance about evictions, online resources, court operations and services, and jury service. Court closure information, operational updates, and pandemic-related communications were distributed through social media, websites, news releases, and participation in local and national community education and training efforts.

The Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts secured a replica of a traveling exhibit on the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, guaranteeing women the right to vote. Because the pandemic prevented displaying the exhibit around the state as a travelling, in-person exhibit, a virtual exhibit was posted online at <https://www.azcourts.gov/newsandinfo/Press-Releases-News/19thAmendment100>.

Workgroup Membership

Aaron Nash, Chair
Administrative Office of the Courts

Kip Anderson
Superior Court in Mohave County

Cathleen Cole
Arizona Foundation for Legal
Services & Education

Scott Davis
Maricopa Justice and City Courts

Tiarra Earls Haas
Superior Court in Maricopa County

Joel Frank England

State Bar of Arizona

Jessica Fotinos
Superior Court in Maricopa County

Hon. David R. Fuller
Chandler Municipal Court

Gretchen Hornberger
Coconino County Law Library

Tara Jackson
Arizona Town Hall

Amy Love
Superior Court in Maricopa County

Alicia Moffatt
Administrative Office of the Courts

Alberto Rodriguez
State Bar of Arizona

Workgroup Reports

Judicial and Attorney Engagement

The Workgroup is developing a web portal for judicial officers to learn about pro bono and community service opportunities.

The Workgroup continued its efforts to increase pro bono participation by public lawyers by identifying appropriate opportunities for those lawyers and reducing barriers to participation.

Workgroup members also worked with retired lawyers and the State Bar to utilize Rule 38 to encourage pro bono service by retired lawyers.

Workgroup Membership

Pamela Bridge
Community Legal Services, Inc.

Daniel K. Christensen
Intel Corporation

Hon. Maria Elena Cruz
Arizona Court of Appeals

Pat Gerrich Esq.
Community Legal Services, Inc.

Carol Rose
State Bar of Arizona

Online Dispute Resolution

Court-related Online Dispute Resolution (“ODR”) creates a digital space that parties in certain types of legal disputes can use to more conveniently resolve their court case. ODR has many benefits, including ease of use, 24/7 access and a more efficient and affordable for users.

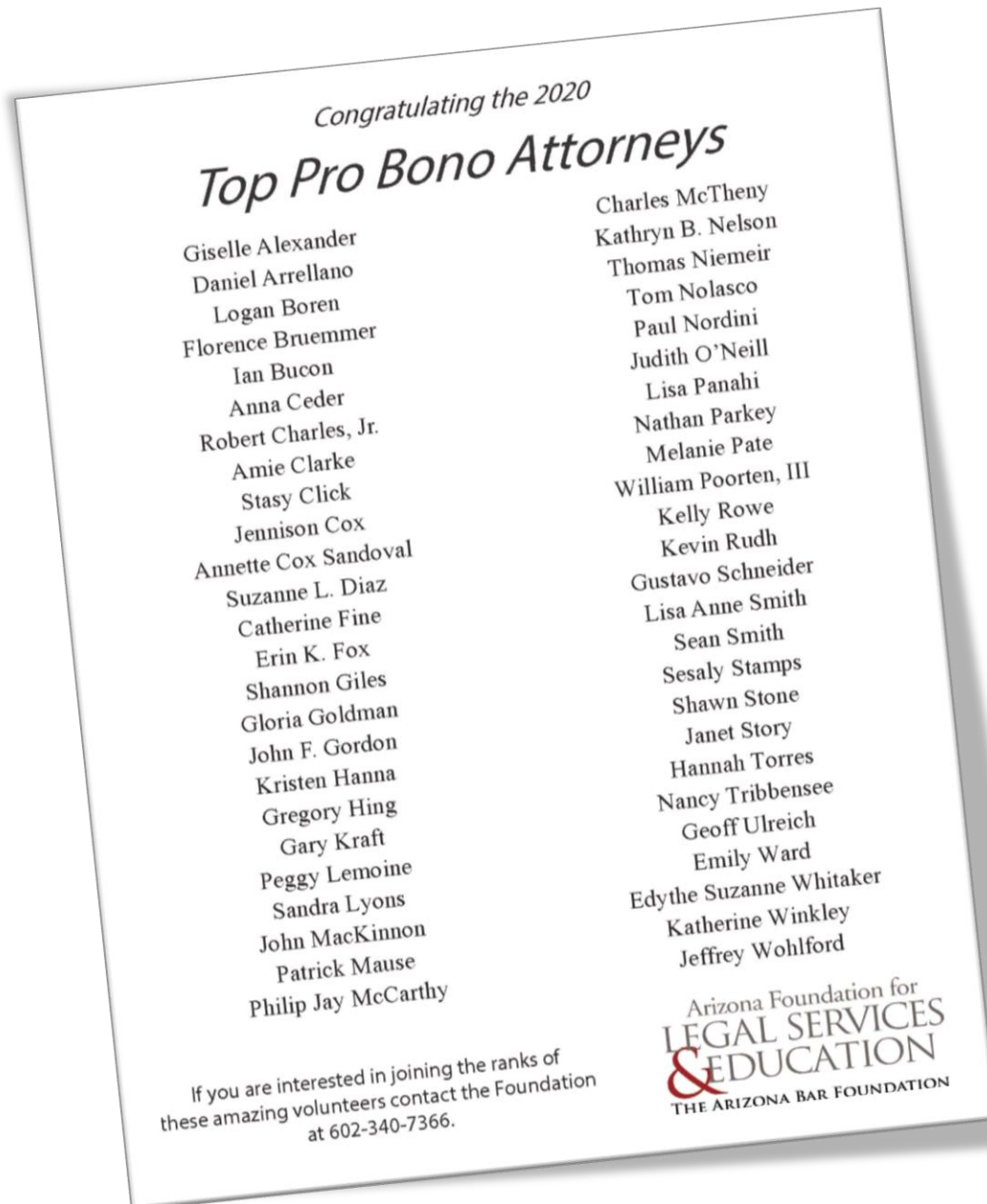
In 2020, family courts in Yuma and Pinal counties participated in ODR pilot programs. The Scottsdale Municipal Court also piloted misdemeanor and parking cases in 2020. Maricopa County piloted its own ODR program in its courts for civil debt collection and child support enforcement cases.

A workgroup consisting of members from Arizona’s Administrative Office of the Court’s standing committees will analyze the data from these pilot projects and determine the next steps, including:

- Allowing participants to opt-in/opt-out
- Making ODR a mandatory option and requiring all courts to participate
- Expanding the types of legal disputes to include in ODR
- Evaluating the cost of administering these programs
- Prioritizing the use of ODR before expanding to statewide participation

Encouraging Pro Bono Participation

The Arizona Bar Foundation's Pro Bono Portal [probono.azbf.org] identifies pro bono opportunities for lawyers around the state. At its 2020 convention, the State Bar of Arizona sponsored a statewide webinar on pro bono opportunities available to lawyers both in private practice and those employed by the government. The webinar featured presentations by multiple members of the Access to Justice Commission. Additionally, the Commission actively supported the Supreme Court's recent rule revision that allows and encourages retired and inactive lawyers to volunteer pro bono civil legal services.



Arizona Tax Credit Funding Support

[needs 2019 tax year contributions info and copy over what still applies from the 2019 report. Available in February]

Support Access to Justice through the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit

Roughly 25% of Arizonans have an income stream that qualifies them for free civil legal aid services. But, for every 3 people in Arizona who realize they have a legal problem and contact a legal aid office, 2 must be turned away because of a lack of resources.

Charitable Tax Credit donations directly reduce the amount you owe and let you direct where your funds go!

You can help more people receive services by designating where \$400 (single) or \$800 (married filing jointly) of your taxes owed go! Give to an approved legal aid agency (see other side) and the amount you give will reduce the tax you owe.

That simple.

Join the campaign!

Help Legal Aid at Azflse.org/LegalAid

Legal Service Providers COVID-19 Efforts

Southern Arizona Legal Aid (“SALA”)



During the pandemic, SALA offices closed to in-person interactions and transitioned to working remotely to assist clients. To maintain services, SALA expanded its call center and directed clients to their website. Most requests for legal assistance in 2020 were for housing and unemployment. To

adapt to the virtual service model, SALA applied for a COVID-19-related grant from the Arizona Community Fund to purchase cellphones, mobile hotspots and laptops for staff.

Community Legal Services (“CLS”)



CLS likewise transitioned its intake services to telephone and online interactions. Through an extensive outreach effort, CLS sent COVID-19-related information to farmworkers and community partners on landlord notification, unemployment resources, and stimulus checks. In addition, CLS in 2020 conducted 13 legal lunchtime webinars on a variety of topics, many of which were related to COVID-19-specific legal issues.

DNA People’s Legal Services (“DNA”)

DNA’s service area is large because the Navajo Nation encompasses parts of three states: Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. At different times during the pandemic the Navajo Nation was subject to stay-home orders and curfews and DNA staff was self-quarantined in an abundance of caution for the protection of the public and staff. The Hopi Nation, which is located within the Navajo Nation and New Mexico, implemented strict regulations regarding travel.

As a result of these restrictions, DNA transitioned to a combination of working remotely, posting updated information on their website regarding COVID-19, and referring clients to the AZLawHelp website. DNA applied for a COVID-19-related grant from the Arizona Community Fund to purchase cellphones, mobile hotspots and laptops for staff.

Select Public Presentations

Over the past several years, the Chairs and Commission members have regularly taken part in presentations, meetings, and events across Arizona concerning access to justice initiatives.

Due to the widespread impact of the COVID-19 virus, however, and the restrictions in place because of that pandemic, the nature and extent of public presentations concerning access to justice issues and the work and recommendations of the Commission were also significantly restricted. A select list of virtual public presentations during 2020 included:

- Gretchen Hornberger, Coconino County Law Librarian, “Law4AZ Library Project 2.0,” February 4, 2020.
- Gregg Hanchett, Director of the Arizona Office of Administrative Hearings, “Self-Represented Litigants: Public Information, Website Resources and Training for Administrative Law Judges,” May 14, 2020.
- Judges Joseph Kreamer and Lawrence Winthrop, Arizona State Bar Convention, “The New Rule 38: Senior/Retired lawyer Pro Bono Opportunities,” recorded Sept. 10, 2020; aired with live Q and A, December 2, 2020.
- Judge Lawrence Winthrop, ABA National Meeting of State Access to Justice Commission Chairs, Opening Plenary Panel “Where is the ATJ Commission Movement Headed in the 2020s and Beyond?” (with Amy Johnson, Judge Mark Juhas, and Justice Maria Kahn), September 30, 2020.
- Cathleen Cole, Arizona Bar Foundation, Ignite Talk, Closing Plenary National Meeting of State Access to Justice Commission Chairs, “A Website’s Key to Success – Interagency Collaborations (AZCourtHelp.org and AZCourtCare.org)” October 29, 2020.
- Judge Lawrence Winthrop, ABA National Meeting of State Access to Justice Commission Chairs, breakout session, “Justice in Government” project (with Karen Lash) November 17, 2020.
- Patricia Lee Refo, President American Bar Association, “ABA Support for Access to Justice Initiatives,” November 19, 2020.
- Professor Rebecca Sandefur, “Understanding the Justice Gap and the Potential for Non-Legal Service Providers to Help Bridge That Gap,” Nov. 19, 2020.

Arizona Access to Justice Commission Members

Co-Chairs

Hon. Samuel A. Thumma, Arizona Court of Appeals - Division I

Hon. Lawrence F. Winthrop, Arizona Court of Appeals - Division I

Members

Kip Anderson, Superior Court in Mohave County

Mike Baumstark, Administrative Office of the Courts

Pamela Bridge, Community Legal Services, Inc.

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Kevin Ruegg Ph.D., Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education

Rodolfo Sanchez, DNA People's Legal Services

Dr. Rebecca Sandefur, Arizona State University

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Hon. Valerie Wyant, Superior Court in Coconino County

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